

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 SSM-03 TRSE-00 /073 W
-----271902Z 088604 /41

P R 271736Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6390
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3806

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IS
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH EZER WEIZMAN

BEGIN SUMMARY: WEIZMAN TOLD ME HE HOPED DMC COULD
BE BROUGHT INTO THE COALITION AND THAT DAYAN WOULD REMAIN,
ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT HOPEFUL. HE REPEATED LIKUD'S KNOWN
VIEWS REGARDING THE NECESSITY OF ISRAEL RETAINING THE
TERRITORIES AND PREDICTED THAT RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.
MAY BE TROUBLESOME BUT WILL BE MORE HONEST THAN THEY
WOULD HAVE BEEN UNDER LABOR. END SUMMARY

1. I HAD PROSPECTIVE DEFENSE MINISTER EZER WEIZMAN
TO LUNCH MAY 27 FOR A WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION OF THE
ELECTION, THE NEXT GOVERNMENT AND U.S.-ISRAELI
RELATIONS. HE WAS DISARMINGLY GARRULOUS, SEEMINGLY
FRANK, AND CONSIDERABLY MORE SERIOUS THAN HIS PLAYBOY
REPUTATION HAD LED ME TO EXPECT.

2. WEIZMAN SAID HIS ONLY REGRET ABOUT THE ELECTION
WAS THAT HE HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO BE CRITICAL OF
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SHIMON PERES, WITH WHOM HE HAD ALWAYS HAD CLOSE
RELATIONS AND WHOM HE RESPECTS VERY MUCH. HE SAID
HE HAD NEVER WAVERED IN HIS BELIEF THAT THE LIKUD
WOULD WIN THE ELECTION AND FORM THE NEX GOVERN-
MENT BUT HE ADMITTED TO BEING VERY SURPRISED AT
THE MARGIN OF THE LIKUD VICTORY. HE SAID HE HAD
TAKEN OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN FROM

BEGIN WHO HAD RUN PREVIOUS ELECTION CAMPAIGNS IN AN UNIMAGINATIVE MANNER AND HAD ANGAGED THE SERVICES OF A TOP FLIGH PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM. IT WAS TRUE THERE HAD BEEN NO KEY ISSUES AT STAKE IN THE CAMPAIGN BUT, HE MAINTAINED,MANY PEOPLE WHO VOTED FOR THE LIKUD HAD PROBABLY DONE SO FOR ITS FOREIGN POLICY STAND. NEVERTHELESS, THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE LABOR PARTY DEFEAT WAS THAT IT WAS NOT TRUE TO ITS EARLIER TRADITIONS AND HAD MOVED AWAY FROM ITS CONSTITUENCY.

3. REGARDING EFFORTS TO FORM THE COALITION, WEIZMAN SAID HE WOULD DO HIS UTMOST TO BRING IN THE DMC. HE CONSIDERS THE DMC TO BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BROADEN THE GOVERNMENT BASE AND TO OBTAIN THE OBVIOUS TALENT WHICH IS PRESENT IN YADIN'S PARTY. HE ADMITTED THAT THE NEXT CABINET, PARTICULARLY IF THE DMC COMES IN, WILL INCLUDE A GROUP OF HIGHLY CHARISMATIC INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY WORKING TOGETHER. HE WAS TAKEN ABACK AND VERY CHAGRINED ABOUT THE CURRENT STORM OF CRITICISM AROUND BEGIN'S OFFER OF FOREIGN MINISTRY TO DAYAN AND ADMITTED THAT THE MATTER HAD BEEN HANDLED VERY POORLY. BEGIN SHOULD HAVE SUGGESTED IN THE COURSE OF COALITION DISCUSSIONS WITH YADIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES THAT CONSIDERATION MIGHT BE GIVEN TO BRINGING DAYAN INTO THE CABINET. IN RETROSPECT, IT WAS A SERIOUS MISTAKE TO HAVE MADE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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DECISION FIRST AND THEN HAVE ANNOUNCED IT PUBLICLY WITHOUT CONSULTING POTENTIAL COALITION PARTNERS. HE HOPED THE MATTER COULD BE RESOLVED AND THAT DAYAN, WITH HIS TALENT AND REPUTATION, COULD BE KEPT IN THE CABINET; HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC AND ADMITTED THAT SUNDAY'S MEETING OF THE LIKUD CENTRAL COMMITTEE MAY LEAD TO A WITHDRAWAL OF THE OFFER. HE SAID THAT IF HE HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN DAYAN AND THE DMC, HE WOULD OPT SADLY FOR THE DMC. HOWEVER, HE REMAINS OPTIMISTIC THAT THE COALITION WILL BE COMPLETED IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT CAN BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE HISTADRUT ELECTIONS JUNE 21. IF THAT SCHEDULE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3806

IS MAINTAINED, IT COULD BE EXPECTED THAT BEGIN
COULD TRAVEL TO THE U.S. AS EARLY AS THE FIRST
WEEK OF JULY.

4. MINISTER OF DEFENSE WEIZMAN WOULD ANTICIPATE
NO DIFFICULTIES IN HIS RELATIONS WITH BEGIN AS PRIME
MINISTER. HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH BEGIN EARLIER TODAY
HOW THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WOULD BE RUN; BEGIN
ASKED THAT HE BE FULLY INFORMED BUT INDICATED THAT
HE WOULD LEAVE DECISIONS TO WEIZMAN. HE STRESSED
THAT IN THEIR FIRST DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE
ELECTION, BEGIN HAD SAID TO HIM THAT AS PRIME
MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE THEIR OVERRIDING
CONCERN MUST BE TO AVOID WAR. WEIZMAN SAID THAT
HE DID NOT WISH TO VISIT THE U.S. AS DEFENSE
MINISTER ANY EARLIER THAN NECESSARY. ALTHOUGH HE
IS, IN GENERAL, WELL-INFORMED ABOUT ISRAEL'S
DEFENSE POSTURE, HE POINTED OUT HE HAD NOT BEEN
ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN DEFENSE MATTERS FOR SEVEN
YEARS. HE HOPES FOR TIME.

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5. WEIZMAN REPEATED BEGIN'S FAMILAR ARGUMENTS
ABOUT THE NECESSITY FOR ISRAEL TO KEEP THE WEST
BANK AND GAZA IN ORDER TO ENSURE PEACE AND THE
SECURITY OF ISRAEL'S POPULATION CENTERS. (HE
PUT THE ENTIRE STRESS ON DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS,

DISMISSING COMPLETELY THE IDEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC CLAIM TO THE WEST BANK WHICH BEGIN EMPHASIZES.) HE SAID THE ISSUE IS NOT ONE OF TERRITORIES BUT OF LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THE ARABS. HE SAID HE HAD ADVISED BEGIN AGAINST GOING TO QADOUM 48 HOURS AFTER THE ELECTION BUT BEGIN REFUSED TO BE DISSUADED FROM AN EARLIER COMMITMENT. HE ASSURED ME THAT UNDER THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT, AND IN THE INTERIM PERIOD BEFORE A NEW GOVERNMENT IS INSTALLED, HE WOULD BE FIRMLY AGAINST ANY UNAUTHORIZED SETTLEMENT ATTEMPTS BY THE GUSH EMUNIM. IF SUCH SETTLEMENTS WERE ESTABLISHED, HE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE GOVERNMENT MOVE FIRMLY AND IMMEDIATELY TO EVICT THE SETTLERS AND HE WOULD INFORM ANYBODY FROM GUSH EMUNIM IN ADVANCE THAT THAT WOULD BE HIS POSITION.

6. WEIZMAN SAID HE SAW TWO CORSE ISSUES FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT OVER THE NEXT IX MONTHS, APART FROM QUESTIONS RELATED TO GENEVA AND PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. FIRST, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE WEST BANK REMAIN QUIET. THIS MUST BE A QUIET BASED ON MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, NOT IMPOSED BY FORCE. DEMONSTRATIONS OR REPRESSIVE ACTIONS BY ISRAEL IN THE TERRITORIES WOULD MAKE THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. SECOND, THE NEW GOVERNMENT MUST SUCCESSFULLY COPE WITH THE HISTADRUT ELECTION AND WITH RELATED SOCIAL AND LABOR ISSUES. HE SAID HE HAS DECLINED TO ACT AS CAMPAIGN MANAGER FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LIKUD IN THE JUNE 21 HISTADRUT ELECTIONS, BUT THOUGHT BOTH LIKUD AND THE DMC WOULD DO WELL. HE STRONGLY BELIEVED THE HISTADRUT MUST EVENTUALLY BE DIVESTED OF ITS EMPLOYER ROLE, BUT ADMITTED THIS WOULD BE A LONG, HARD FIGHT TO ACHIEVE.

7. WEIZMAN ANTICIPATES PROBLEMS WITH THE U.S. IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. THESE PROBLEMS WILL ARISE BECAUSE OF THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT'S VIEW ON THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES--VIEW WHICH HE SAID ARE SHARED BY A MAJORITY OF ISRAEL'S CITIZENS. HOWEVER, THE DIFFERENCES WITH THE UNITED STATES WILL BE OPENLY AND MORE HONESTLY DISCUSSED THAN IN THE PAST, AND THAT THIS CAN ONLY BE AN ADVANTAGE. IN FACT, HE ARGUES THAT THE U.S. WOULD HAVE FACED MANY OF THE SAME PROBLEMS WITH AN ALIGNMENT GOVERNMENT BUT THE LIKUD WILL BE

FRANKER IN PRESENTING ITS POSITIONS.

8. WE AGREED TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH AND WEIZMAN
SAID HE WOULD BE AS OPEN WITH ME AS HE COULD; HE
SAID HE WOULD TELL ME 95 PERCENT OF WHAT HE
KNEW AND WITHHOLD ONLY FIVE PERSENT. WE SHOOK
HANDS ON THAT UNDERSTANDING.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

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